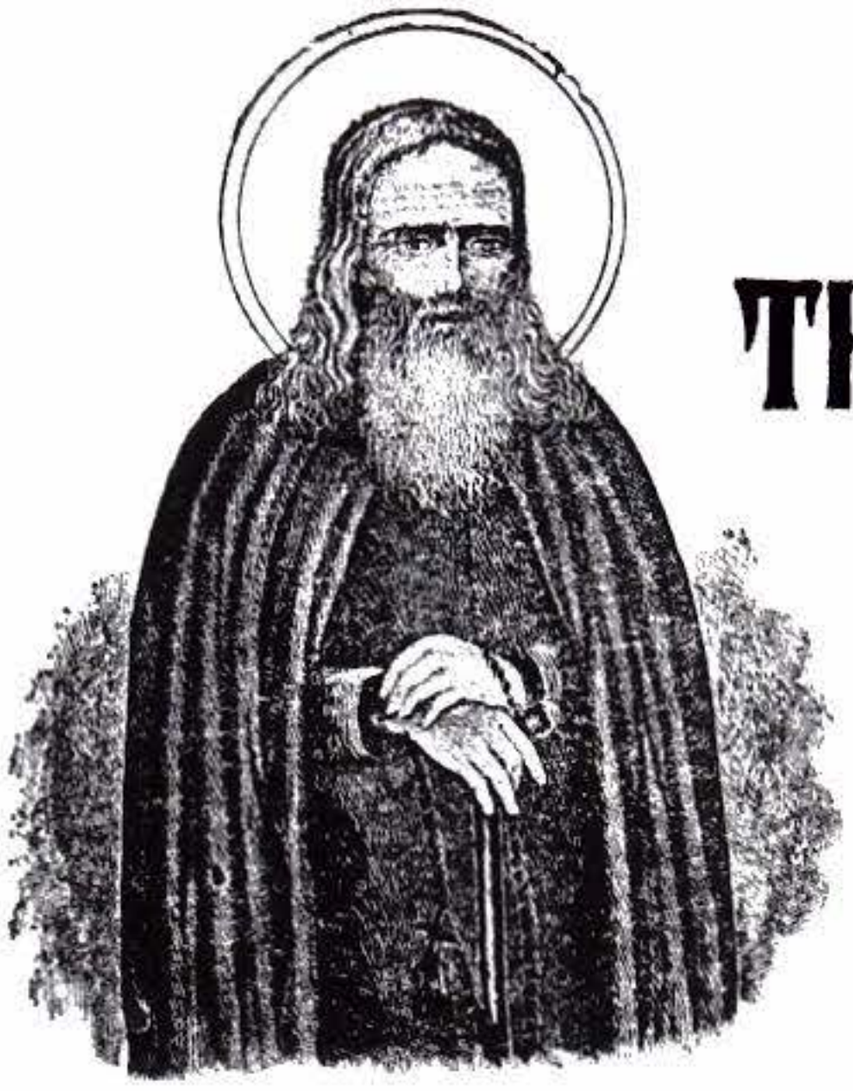
THE ORTHODOX WORD

JULY - AUGUST, 1972

NINETY CENTS

Solovki MARTYROLOGION



THE ORTHODOX WORD

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COVER: 16th-century icon of Sts. Zosimas and Sabbatius with Solovki Monastery which they founded; Ustiug School, painted at Solovki. ILLUSTRATIONS: Page 189: Staretz Amvrosy, courtesy of Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, New York; Staretz Macarius, from the collection of Prof. I. M. Kontzevitch (as also illustrations on pages 179, 180, 188).

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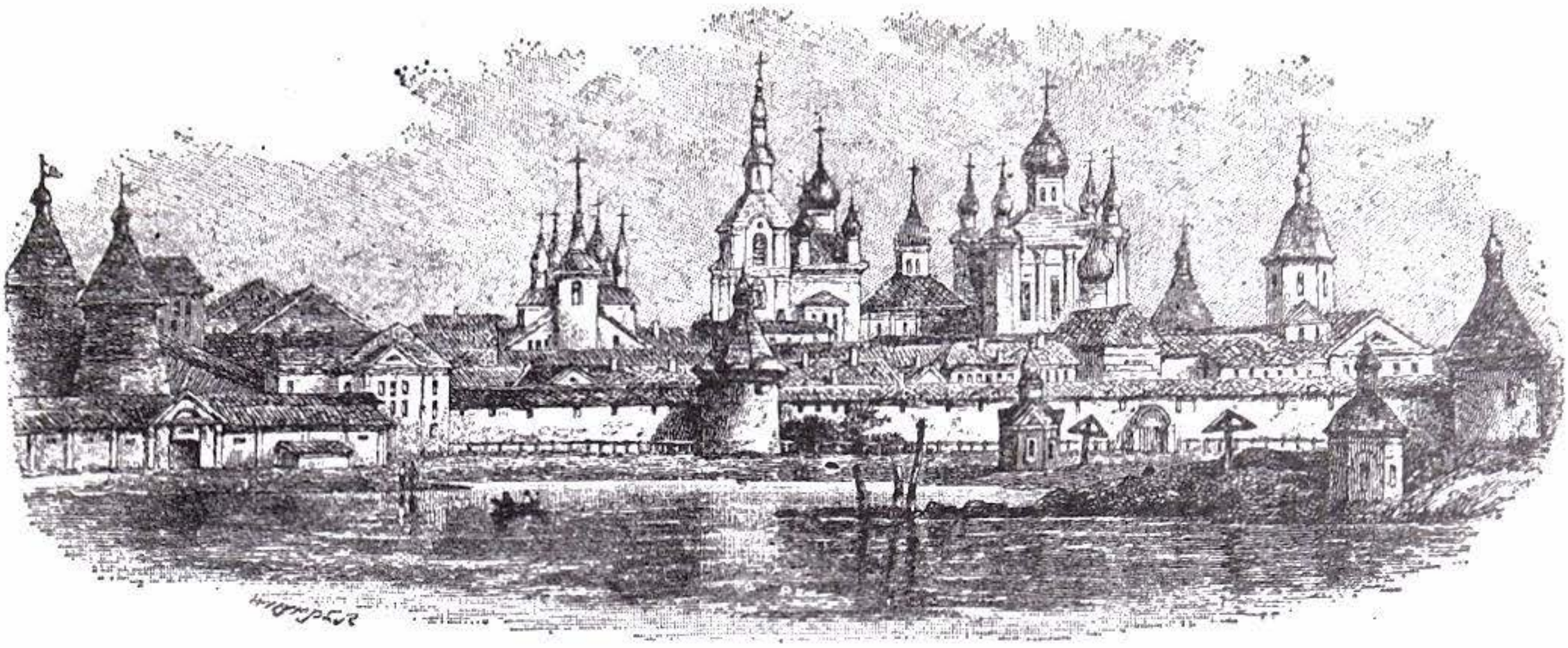


THE SOLOVETSK MONASTERY.

Our Living Inheritance from Solovki Monastery...

LYING IN the cold waters of the White Sea, the towers and ruined churches of the Monastery of Solovki still stand today, silent witnesses of five centuries of ascetic labors and holy deeds. The sacred monastery of Saints Sabbatius, Zosimas, and Herman is the northernmost Lavra of the *Russian Thebaid.*

Today the monastery is being "restored" as an historical monument, but of course the God-hating Soviets will not allow even the mention of the very essence of Solovki — its holiness, exemplified in its life of monastic labors and missionary enlightenment for the northern nomads.

To this twofold significance of Solovki the Soviets themselves have added a third dimension by making it a place of martyrdom for Orthodox Christians. Solovki, beginning just fifty years ago, was the chief concentration camp for clergymen, especially bishops; there the successors of the Apostles worked at such labors as fishing and mending nets. One of Solovki's new martyrs, Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky) noted that "the Holy Spirit turned fishermen into apostles, but the Bolsheviks have turned apostles into fishermen." These latter fishers of human souls, stripped of the outward marks of their apostolic rank, became thereby yet more greatly filled with the Holy Spirit and today shine resplendently as a great source of light for the contemporary world, which sinks ever deeper into the darkness of godlessness.

The saints and ascetics of Solovki, now joined by the new choir of martyrs of the Communist Yoke, are ever alive in the heavenly abodes of the living God, being intercessors by whose prayers we, the last Christians, may draw the strength and inspiration to prepare to join them. The desecration of its holy places has not at all deprived Solovki of the spiritual treasure which, for those with eyes to see, may yet be seen, made our living inheritance, and used to gain an everlasting crown.

THE LIFE OF

Saint Sabbatius of Solovki

IN THE ARCTIC WATERS OF THE WHITE SEA

Commemorated on September 27

IT IS NOT KNOWN from what city or village St. Sabbatius came, nor who his parents were, nor at what age he received the monastic tonsure. It is only known that in the days of the Metropolitan of All Russia Photius (1408-1431) the praiseworthy Elder Sabbatius labored in the White Lake Monastery of St. Cyril.* The devout ascetic mortified his body by prayer, untiring vigil, hunger and thirst, and many other uncountable labors of strict monastic life, zealously going through all the monastic labors, in constant obedience to the abbot and the brethren. For his unwavering fulfillment of his monastic vows St. Sabbatius was beloved and respected by all, being an example of virtuous and labor-loving life for the other brothers of the monastery, so that his name was constantly extolled by the brotherhood and the abbot. But firmly knowing that not from men, but from God, is it meet to seek glory in this earthly life, the Saint was weighed down by the glory rendered to him, and therefore he constantly thought of leaving St. Cyril's monastery, in which he had labored for many years, and of finding a new place for his monastic labors, where it would be possible to live in obscurity and retirement from men.

Hearing that in the same Novgorod province there was a certain Lake Ladoga, and on it an island called Valaam,† where there was a monastery dedicated to the Transfiguration of the Lord, where the monks remain in strict labors, offering unceasing prayers to God and feeding themselves by the labors of their own hands — St. Sabbatius began to ask the abbot and brethren of St. Cyril's monastery to let him go with their blessing to the Valaam monastery to live. Having left with their blessing, the Saint came to Valaam, where he was joyously accepted by the brethren. Here the Saint also spent not a little time. Emulating the difficult labors of those monks and constantly increasing his labors, St. Sabbatius here, just as in St. Cyril's monastery, sur-

* For the Life of St. Cyril (†1429, June 9), see *The Orthodox Word,* 1972, no. 3.

† On Valaam monastery and its founders, Sts. Sergius and Herman, see *The Orthodox Word,* 1970, no.1.

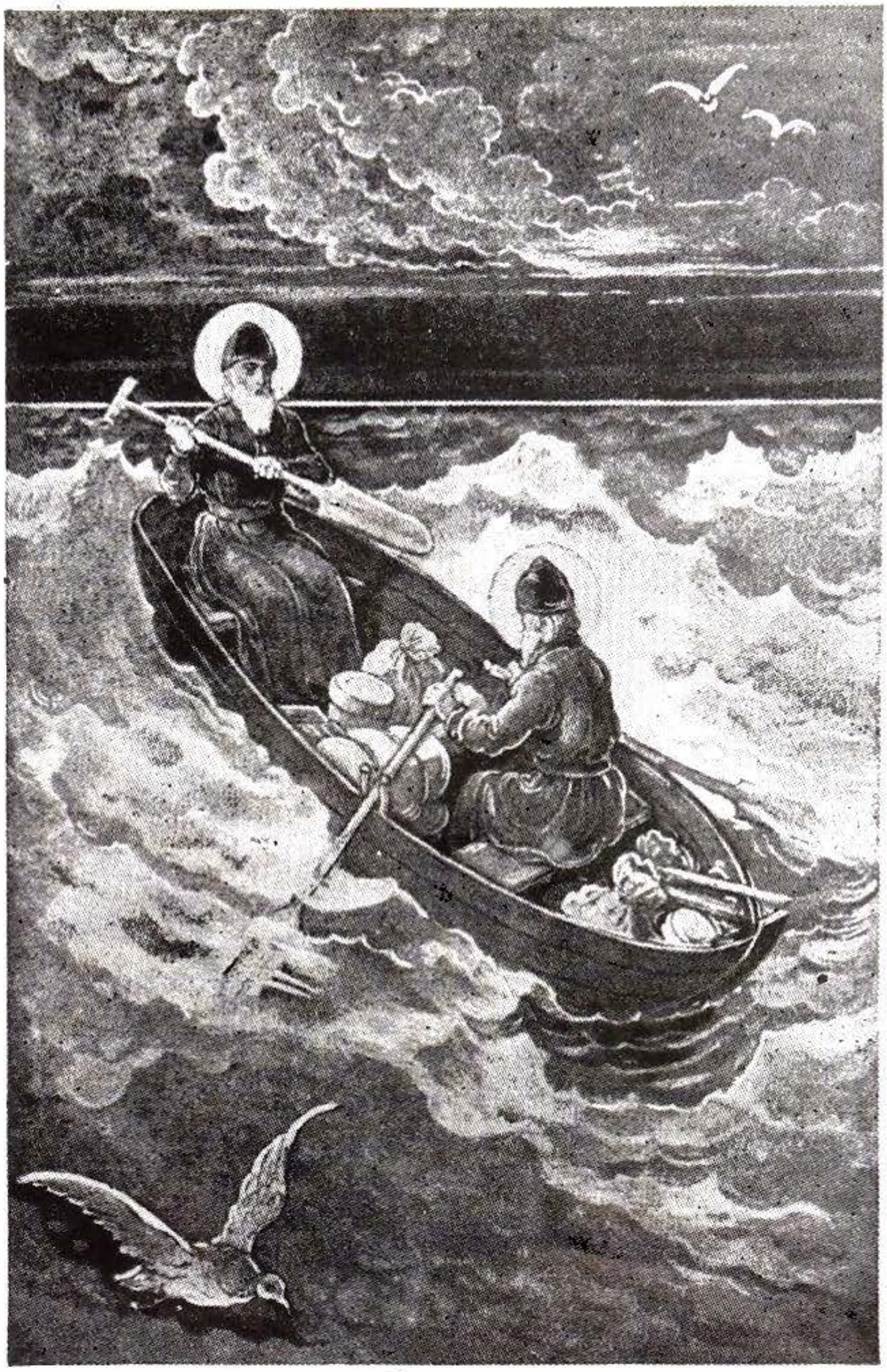
16th Century Moscow Icon

STS. ZOSIMAS AND SABBATIUS OF SOLOVKI

Commemorated together on August 8

TROPARION TO ST. SABBATIUS, TONE 3

HAVING LEFT the world and settled in the wilderness,* in good labors thou hast labored,* in suffering ills and in heedfulness and prayers:* wherefore after death also thou gushest forth healings,* O Sabbatius our father,* pray to Christ God that our souls may be saved.



Voyage to the isles of Solovki
(Watercolor by Archimandrite Cyprian)

passed all in ascetic labors, so that his virtuous life began to be known to all in Valaam, since he mortified his body to the utmost and even during his life-time manifested himself as an abode of the Holy Spirit.

As one experienced in the ascetic life, St. Sabbatius in Valaam monastery was an elder for beginning monks, whom he guided in their ascetic labors. Among his disciples was Gennadius, later Archbishop of Novgorod (1484-1504).

Since in this new place of his sojourn, just as in the monastery of St. Cyril, the Saint was respected and extolled, he again began to grieve, finding it difficult to bear the respect and praise of the brothers, and again he thought of finding a quiet and solitary place for his labors. Previously the Saint had

heard of the uninhabited Solovetsk island, which lay in the cold waters of the White Sea, a two-day's voyage from the mainland. Hearing the tales of the uninhabited isle, the Saint rejoiced in spirit and was filled with a warm desire to settle on it in labors of silence. He began fervently to implore the superior of Valaam monastery to let him go. The superior, however, together with the brethren, loved the Saint and, respecting in him one sent by God, did not want to lose such a praiseworthy elder, who was an example of virtue for everyone, and they implored the Saint not to leave them. Condescending to the requests of the Valaam monks, the Saint lived in the monastery for yet a short while, and then, having prayed to God and trusting in His help, he left the monastery secretly at night, unseen by anyone.

BEING DIRECTED and preserved by God, St. Sabbatius wended his way to Solovetsk island. Having reached the sea, the Saint met people who lived on the shore opposite the island, and he began to question them about the island. They informed him that Solovetsk island was situated far from the shore, that the way to it was difficult and dangerous, that voyagers scarcely reached the island after two days of sailing, and then only in calm weather. Having inquired in detail about the island, the Saint came to the thought that this was a most convenient place for labors of silence and monastic solitude. He found out that the island was more than seventy miles in circumference; near it there were fishing and hunting for sea animals; on it there were sweet water suitable for drinking, fishing lakes, mountains whose tops were covered with building timber, valleys overgrown with smaller trees, and many different berries. The Saint found out that the island was most suitable for human habitation, and it was uninhabited because of the difficult communication with the shore. Many who wished to settle there could not do so because they were afraid of misfortune at sea. Only sometimes, in good weather, fisherman came to the island, but after catching fish they immediately returned to the mainland.

Hearing all this from the coastal residents, St. Sabbatius was inflamed with an ardent desire to settle on Solovetsk island. Finding out about this intention of the blessed one, the coastal inhabitants tried to dissuade him from such thoughts, saying: "O Elder! With what shall you feed and clothe yourself on the island, being in such an advanced age and having nothing? And how will you live in this cold country so far from men, when you already have no strength to do anything for yourself?"

The Saint answered them: "I, my children, have a Master Who makes the nature of an old man young, and likewise brings up an infant to years of ripe old age. He enriches the poor, gives what is necessary to the destitute,

clothes the naked, and with a small measure of food satisfies the hungry, as when in the desert He fed to satiety five thousand men with five breads" (John 6:5-13).

Hearing from the Elder words from the Holy Scripture, some of the people were surprised at his wisdom, but others, through their senselessness, mocked him. In the meantime the Saint, casting his care upon the Lord (Ps. 54:22), retired to the river Vyg, where he met the monk Herman,* who was living there by the chapel. St. Sabbatius lived for some time with St. Herman. From him he found out about Solovetsk island the same things he had already heard from the coastal inhabitants. Having consulted each other and placed their trust in God, both the ascetics decided to go and settle together on the island. Having obtained a boat, and taking with them a little food and clothing, and also some tools for necessary work, they fervently prayed to God and, placing all their hope in Him, they got in the boat and in calm weather began their voyage.

WITH GOD'S HELP, on the third day the Saints reached the island, in the year 1429, and, rejoicing and being glad in soul, they thanked God Who had showed them this deserted spot. On the part of the shore where the boat landed, they placed a cross. After going some distance into the interior of the island, the holy monks saw on the shore of the island a most beautiful mountainous place, where they decided to settle permanently. Here, having built a cell, they began to live for the Lord, dwelling in labors, procuring for themselves lenten food by the sweat of their brow, digging the ground with picks. The Saints labored with their hands, and with their lips they glorified the Lord, drawing near to Him in spirit through constant prayer and the singing of the psalms of David.

After the passing of some time, the inhabitants of the coast which was nearest the island began to envy the holy Elders who had established themselves on the island, and, thinking to banish them from there, said among themselves: "We are the nearest neighbors of the island, more or less its owners, being the natural inhabitants of the Korelian land, and therefore we, and after us our children from generation to generation, should have part in the ownership of the island."

Some time later a certain fisherman, at the advice of his friends, came with his wife and all his family to that island and settled down not far from the cell of the God-pleasing Elders. Living here, he began, together with all his household, to fish in the lakes. The blessed fathers, however, being concerned about their salvation, remained in solitude and did not even know that the fisherman's family had settled there.

* St. Herman of Solovetsk, †1479, July 30.

On one Sunday early in the morning, after performing the usual rule, St. Sabbatius, taking the censer, came out to cense the holy cross which he had erected near his cell. At this time he heard blows and moans, as if someone were being beaten. The Saint greatly feared because of these moans and, thinking it to be an apparition, he guarded himself with the sign of the cross, returned, and told the blessed Herman of the blows and moans he had heard. Leaving the cell and hearing the same, St. Herman went toward the noise and saw a weeping woman and asked her what was wrong with her and why she was weeping. With tears the woman told what had happened to her.

"When I went to the lake with my husband," she said, "two resplendent youths met me and, seizing me, strongly beat me with branches, saying: 'Leave this place; you are unworthy to live here, because God has appointed it for the dwelling of monks. Quickly depart from here so as not to perish from an evil death.' After that the resplendent youths became invisible."

The blessed Herman, returning to the holy Elder Sabbatius, told the latter what he had heard from the fisherman's wife, and togetner they glorified God. The fisherman, taking with him his wife and belongings, without tarrying rowed away to the village where he had lived before. From that time on no one among the laymen dared to settle on the island, and only fishermen came to the island from time to time in order to fish.

After the passage of several years, the blessed Herman left the island to get provisions at the river Onega, and St. Sabbatius with deep faith in God remained alone on the island. The Saint's stay on the island, his fasting, his labors — are known only to the All-knowing Lord, Who looked down upon His Saint, and His holy angels, who visited God's slave Sabbatius, one who in his body imitated the bodiless ones. We, however, can only judge of the labors and privations of the Saint's ascetic life by the very nature of the place where he settled. The holy Elder, remaining alone on the remote island, not visited by anyone, had no other work except occupation in constant labors of prayer and divine vision. And in truth, being deeply engrossed in constant prayerful conversation with God and turning to Him eyes full of tears, the Saint sighed day and night, wishing to leave the body and be united with the Lord.

FEELING IN DEEP old age, after labors pleasing to God, the approach of death, St. Sabbatius began to think of how to become worthy of receiving the Divine Mysteries, of which he had been deprived since leaving Valaam monastery. Having prayed for this to God, he got in a small boat and then, when by his prayer the sea became calm, in two days he crossed to the opposite shore of the sea. Having reached the shore, he walked farther,

wishing to reach the chapel on the river Vyg. It happened that at that time at the Vyg there was a certain Abbot Nathaniel, who had come here with the object of visiting the Christians residing nearby.

Going the way designated beforehand for him by Divine care, he met Abbot Nathaniel, who was going with the Divine Mysteries to a remote village to administer Holy Communion to a sick man. After the usual salutation between monks, the wayfarers entered into conversation, and each finding out who the other was, they were glad to see each other. St. Sabbatius was glad that he had found what he was seeking, and Abbot Nathaniel was glad that he was found worthy to see the honorable gray hairs and the holy face of St. Sabbatius, of whose virtuous life he had heard much. And the blessed Sabbatius said to Nathaniel: "Father, I implore your holiness: by the authority given you by God to forgive, remit my sins which I shall confess to you, and make me worthy of the Communion of the Holy Mysteries of the Most Pure Body and Blood of Christ my Master. For many years already I have been inflamed with the desire to feed my soul with this Divine Food. So, holy father, feed me now, because Christ my God has showed me your holiness in order to cleanse me from the sins which I have committed from my youth up to this day, in word, deed, and thought."

"May God forgive you, brother," answered Abbot Nathaniel, and, having become silent, he raised his hands to heaven and with tears pronounced: "Oh, if only I, for the cleansing of my negligence, could have your sins, O holy one!"

St. Sabbatius said to Nathaniel: "I implore your holiness, immediately make me worthy of the Divine Communion, because the end of my life approaches." The Abbot replied: "My lord, Father Sabbatius, go now to the chapel and wait for me there. I am going now to a sick man and shall soon return to your holiness; early in the morning I will come to you."

To this St. Sabbatius said: "Father, do not put it off until morning; truly, we do not not if we shall breathe the air until tomorrow, and all the more, how can we know what will happen later?" St. Sabbatius said this, foretelling his coming end.

Seeing in Sabbatius one who pleased God, Abbot Nathaniel did not dare to contradict him further, but fulfilling his desire, after performing the confession, he administered the Divine Mysteries of Christ to him, and, giv- him the brotherly kiss, said: "Slave of God, I implore you: wait for me by the chapel on the Vyg."

The Saint agreed to wait there for the Abbot. The latter went to the sick man, and St. Sabbatius went to the appointed place, where, having given thanks to God for the reception of Communion and for all His benefactions

to him, he entered the cell which was at the chapel, and having closed the door, occupied himself with praparing his blessed soul so as to give it over into God's hands.

At that time a certain merchant from Novgorod the Great, by the name of John, who was travelling the river with his wares, reached the chapel which stood on the shore. Leaving his vessel and coming out on the shore, he bowed down to the holy icons in the chapel and, entering the cell, received the blessing of St. Sabbatius. Having given his blessing, St. Sabbatius taught the merchant from the Holy Scriptures, instructing him in good deeds. The merchant was very rich, had slaves, and wished to reward the Saint with all necessities from his wares. The Saint, however, not wishing to take anything from the merchant, said: "If you wish to give alms, you have the needy, but I do not need anything."

After this, the Saint taught John love of the poor, mercy towards members of his household, and other virtues. The merchant was grieved that the Elder had not taken anything from him. Wishing to console him, the Saint said: "Child John! Pass the night here until morning, and you shall see God's grace and go safely on your way."

However, John wished already to leave on his voyage. And behold. suddenly there came a storm with thunder and lightning, and the river and the sea became rough. Seeing the sudden change of weather and the great roughness of the water, John was filled with fear and remained to pass the night there. In the morning he came to the cell, wishing before his departure — for the roughness had subsided — to receive the Saint's blessing. Having knocked with prayer at the door of the Saint's cell, he did not receive any answer. After he had knocked a second and a third time, the door opened and, entering the cell, John saw the Saint sitting in his mantle and hood with the censer near him. And the merchant said to the Saint: "Forgive me, slave of God, because, having love and faith toward your holiness, I have dared to come to you. I beg your holiness, give me your blessing for my voyage so that, guarded by your holy prayers, I may travel safely."

When John had said this, in answer there was neither voice nor response, because the holy soul of the Saint had departed unto the Lord, and at that time a strong fragrance spread througout the cell. Seeing that the Saint did not answer him, and thinking that he was asleep, John came to him and touched him with his hand; but becoming convinced that he had reposed in the Lord, he was filled with awe and at the same time was moved with feeling and warm tears gushed forth from his eyes.

At that time the Abbot Nathaniel returned from the sick man. He entered the cell and, seeing that the Saint had reposed, he wept bitterly and

kissed his righteous body. The Abbot and the merchant told each other about the Saint — the former, how yesterday he had been found worthy to administer to the Saint of God the Divine Mysteries; and the second, how he had been found worthy to delight in soul-profitting conversation with the Saint. After the funeral hymns, they buried the holy body of the Saint, returning earth unto earth.

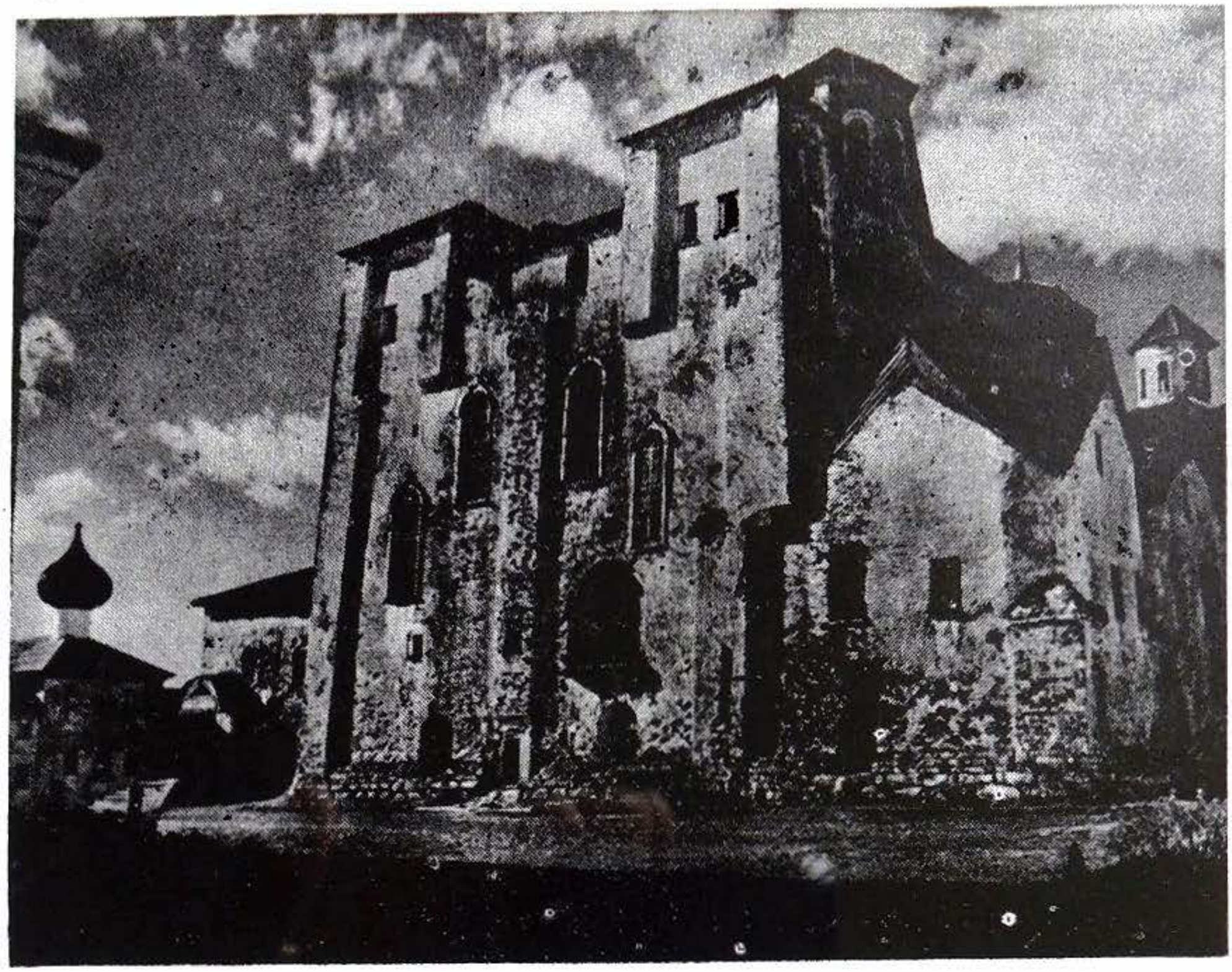
Saint Sabbatius died on the 27th day of the month of September, in the year 1435. On this day his memory is venerated to the glory of God Who is glorified in the Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, to Whom may there be glory and worship forever. Amen.

Solovki PATERICON

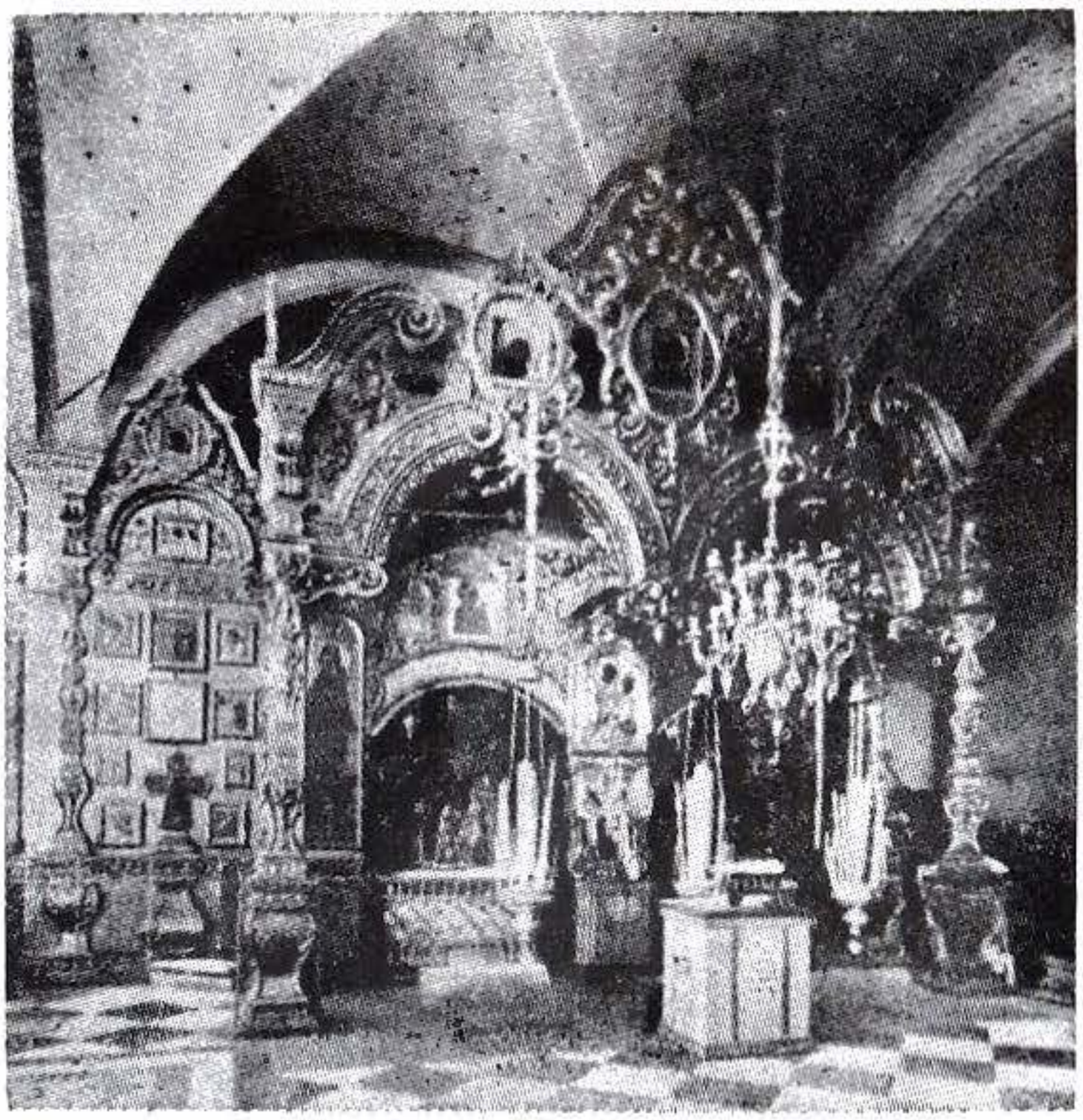
THE YEAR AFTER St. Sabbatius' repose, *St. Herman* returned to Solovetsk island, this time with another seeker of solitude, *St. Zosimas* (†April 18, 1478), who was responsible for the foundation of a cœnobitic monastery there. St. Zosimas' holy life attracted many others and the whole group of the Solovki islands became inhabited and adorned by holy monks througout all these centuries, until in 1922 the God-hating Soviets desecrated it, turning it into a fierce "isle of hellish terror"...

But it was St. Herman who dictated and left for posterity the accounts of Sts. Sabbatius' and Zosimas' holy labors, who collected a large manuscript library, and who generally was responsible for the formation of the Solovki monastic tradition, a tradition whose fruits may be seen in the *Solovki Patericon* of 1873, which lists a whole army of saints, some canonized and others still waiting for their earthly glorification. Among the canonized saints are: the missionary to the Laps *St. Theodoritus*; the Abbot *St. Phillip*, who later became a hieromartyr as Metropolitan of Moscow, and his disciples and founders of local sketes, *Sts. John and Longinus, Sts. Bassian and Jonah*; *St. Irenarchus* the Abbot and his friend *St. Eleazar,* founder of the Anzerka Skete, who was worthy to behold the vision of the Most Holy Theotokos Herself; and the simple monk-hermits entirely living in divine vision: *Sts. Elisha, Diodorus, Andrew, Sabbas, Nestor, Nicephorus.* Of the uncanonized saints it is important to mention the Blessed *Job* (or *Joshua*), the founder of the Golgotha Skete; the blessed desert-dweller *Theophanes,* disciple of Paisius Velichkovsky, and his angel-like disciple *Clement;* and then the Elders *Nahum, Matthew, Gerasimus, Pamphilus, Zosimas, Jerome,* and many, many more. There were yet others in the second half of the last century whose names were not entered into the 1873 listing. Indeed, the names of all the saints of Solovki are known to the Lord alone...

Above: Holy Transfiguration Monastery at Solovki. Below: The Refectory



The main cathedral of the Monastery of Solovki as it looks today, after being converted into a prison, with domes and crosses removed



Shrine with the holy relics of Sts. Sabbatius and Zosimas in the main cathedral. Beside it the daily cycle of Divine services was conducted until the Communists closed the holy Lavra of the Far North and turned it into an infamous concentration camp.

Solovki MARTYROLOGION

The blood of martyrs
is the seed of Christianity.

THE WORLD will never know the full story of the thousands of innocent victims and martyrs of the concentration camp which the Soviets installed in one of the holiest shrines of Holy Russia — the Solovki Islands.* God alone knows fully what was done there, what tortures were devised in order to obliterate all trace of God's grace in this centuries-old monastic citadel. Even the limited information that does exist, which will ever shine as a blazing witness of Christ's presence in His worthy servants, has never been compiled into a *Martyrologion of Solovki.* This is regrettable, for the glory of Christ's martyrs is potent to renew and inspire the Orthodox people of our day. These martyrs are God's witnesses, His saints, and are able to intercede for us who languish on this earth. Here we shall mention just a few of the new martyrs who at some time or other have suffered on Solovki — that sacred altar of sacrifice to God for our sins, whereon the beast of our times, Communism, slaughtered its victims, who are the chosen ones of God. Quite recently the Soviets have transferred all the slave laborers from Solovki to more remote regions in Siberia, and they are turning what remains of the monastery into an historical museum, even now shamelessly passing off some of their torture chambers as the product of the monks and their "religious darkness"! Those Orthodox Christians to whom truth is more precious than anything else should pronounce the following names with the sign of the cross, asking the prayers of these new martyrs.

PETER (Zverev, 1878-1929), ARCHBISHOP OF VORONEZH: Undeniably a holy man, while still alive he appeared to people in dreams, and was a close friend of a holy woman of Voronezh, the fool for Christ Theoktista Michaelovna, who predicted his arrival at the See of Voronezh, where he was highly revered

* For materials on the Solovki concentration camp, see: In Russian: *The Red Prison,* by M. Z. Nikonov-Smorodin, Sofia, 1938; *The Inextinguishable Icon-lamp,* by Boris Shiriaev, New York, 1954; *Russia in Concentration Camp,* by Ivan Solonevich, Argentina, 1952. In English: *Forced Labor in the Soviet Union,* by David Dallin and Boris I. Nicolaevsky, Yale University Press, 1947; and (on general conditions of religious prisoners in Soviet camps) *I Found God in Soviet Russia,* by John H. Noble, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1959.

for his long and inspiring church services. After several arrests and banishments, he was sent to Solovki in 1927 and assigned to a work brigade quartered in the main cathedral, which was very painful for him. His devoted priest ARCHIMANDRITE INNOCENT, who arrived together with him from Voronezh, very soon developed a severe malady and died in his arms. Bishop Peter was transferred to the most feared place — the former Golgotha Skete on the hill of Anzerka island, where the death rate was especially high. Deeply moved by the holiness of the monastery and the literal Golgotha of Holy Russia, he composed a very moving akathist to St. Herman of Solovki, which has survived together with a few of his letters which strike one with their spirit of apostolic times. There on the hill of Golgotha he died by freezing on January 25, 1929, the feast day of his beloved icon of the Mother of God "Assuage My Sorrow," the troparion of which he sang always and everywhere. He was buried on the main monastery grounds but his grave-site was levelled with the earth. He was one of the outstanding hierarchs on Solovki at a time when there were over 90 bishops there — some two-thirds of the hierarchs of the Russian Church.

ARSENIUS (Zhadonovsky, 1875-1935), ARCHBISHOP OF SERPUKHOV: Chosen of God from his childhood, he developed into a flaming preacher against atheism, showing its philosophical poverty, for which, of course, the atheists made his life one of perpetual arrests and sufferings, until finally he came to Solovki. But here, although shaved and stripped of any trace of his hierarchal dignity, working amongst criminal prisoners, with even greater fervency and fearlessness he preached against atheism. He had to endure many punishments for this, but nothing could stop him and his influence grew. Finally, after he was moved to another prison, on June 17, 1935, Cheka agents took him and nine other prisoners out of their barracks. Vladika knew his hour had come. He gave his blessing to his companions, saying to them: "Pray and be strong." Turning to his murderers he delivered a farewell word, forgiving them, and thus all ten were shot and thrown into a common grave, gloriously entering the heavenly paradise.

EUGENE (Zernov, †1937), ARCHBISHOP of the Amur region: An outstanding hierarch, he was the leading representative of the hierarchs at Solovki from 1923 to 1926. At that time some Solovki monks were allowed to stay and work for pay on the territory of their monastery, and for them his authority was sacred, extending into areas that cannot be understood by those who are not inwardly spiritual. When a certain monk became ill and useless for work at Solovki and could find no shelter for himself there, Vladika Eugene, being asked by the monk what he should do, told him that it would be best for him to die at the monastery, as he had promised by his monastic vow. The monk agreed, saying, "Bless and pray." "God will bless you," said Vladika; and in a few days the monk died in accordance with his and Vladika's prayers, which were heard by God. The agreement of two together was sufficient to obtain what was asked, and thus the monk did not leave his monastery. Archbishop Eugene, the factual head of the prisoners of Solovki at this time, received martyrdom during the Ezhov purge.

SERAPHIM (Mescheriakov, †1932), METROPOLITAN OF THE CAUCASUS: Coming from a "professional hierarch" circle, he did not withstand the temptation of the "Renovationists" and joined them. Realizing what he had done, he publicly repented and was forgiven by Patriarch Tikhon, and soon he found himself on Solovki. There the real meaning of our earthly life revealed itself before his eyes and he was spiritually reborn: he became filled with exuberant joy in the Lord and was constantly saying, "Only *now* I live, for I was dead before." He was shot along with 120 other clergymen in the Rostov prison in 1932.

DAMASCENE (Cedrick, †1936?), BISHOP OF GLUKHOV: Deeply disturbed by the Sergian "Declaration" and tormented by the thought of how to nourish and preserve for posterity the "City of God" of the chosen few, he wrote his truly classic epistles — a splendid testament of the greatness of these "catacomb" sons of Holy Russia. The first truly catacomb bishop was MAXIM (Zhizhilenko, †1930) OF SERPUKHOV, and other outstanding "Josephite" bishops were likewise imprisoned at Solovki: VICTOR OF GLAZOV, HILARION OF SMOLENSK, PACHOMIUS OF CHERNIGOV, SERAPHIM OF UGLICH, and others.

ALEXANDER J. JACOBSON (†1929?) presents the extremely moving image of a Jew-martyr: while still a student of medicine he became a convert to the Orthodox Church and began missionary work among the Jews, for which he was arrested and sent to Solovki. Here, working as a doctor's assistant and trying to help the dying prisoners 24 hours a day out of love for Christ, he endured a double harassment for being an Orthodox Christian "fanatic" and for being a Jew besides. But his glowing Christ-like humility and the burning faith of a true martyr make him an adornment of the holy place of Sts. Sabbatius and Zosimas, whom he warmly loved.

FATHER NICHOLAS ZAGOROVSKY (see page 178).

ABBOT ANTONIN of Simonov Monastery in Moscow: Imprisoned in 1925, he soon died from overwork. When he was lying in his coffin, a severely ill prisoner, seeing him, began to ask his prayers as of a martyr, and at once he received healing, thus proving the witness of the ancient martyrs in our days.

THE 30 NUNS OF SHAMARDINO CONVENT, which was founded by Staretz Amvrosy of Optina Monastery. They were brought to Solovki in the summer of 1929 and placed in the women's quarters and ordered to work in the brick factory. These nuns were all deeply devoted to their spiritual father, who, considering that the Soviet government is of the nature of the coming Antichrist, forbade them to do any work for the Soviets. It is difficult even to imagine what hardships these fervent women endured, but they did not do any work. Finally they were separated and individually liquidated. (There was a similar case in the Vorkuta camps, where a great miracle occurred, as described in John Noble's book.)

There are many other highly inspiring testaments of holy people who received martyrs' crowns on the sacred isles of Solovki and now, high in God's glory, are praying for us last Christians to our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom may there be glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The Decline of the Patriarchate of Constantinople

By ARCHBISHOP JOHN MAXIMOVITCH

Translators' Introduction

The anti-Orthodox career and statements of the late Patriarch Athenagoras of sorry memory have been so striking that they have perhaps tended to obscure the fact that the apostasy of this one man was merely the culmination of a long and thorough process of the departure from the Orthodox Faith of an entire Local Orthodox Church. The promise of the new Patriarch Demetrios to "follow upon the footsteps of our great Predecessor... in pursuing Christian unity" and to institute "dialogues" with Islam and other non-Christian religions, while recognizing "the holy blessed Pope of Rome Paul VI, the first among equals within the universal Church of Christ" (Enthronement Address) — only confirms this observation and reveals the depths to which the Church of Constantinople has fallen in our own day.

It should be noted that the title "Ecumenical" was bestowed on the Patriarch of Constantinople as a result of the transfer of the capital of the Roman Empire to this city in the 4th century; the Patriarch then became the bishop of the city which was the center of the *ecumene* or civilized world. Lamentably, in the 20th century the once-glorious See of Constantinople, having long since lost its earthly glory, has cheaply tried to regain prestige by entering on two new "ecumenical" paths: it has joined the "ecumenical movement," which is based on an anti-Christian universalism; and, in imitation of apostate Rome, it has striven to subject the other Orthodox Churches to itself and make of its Patriarch a kind of Pope of Orthodoxy.

The following article, which is part of a report on all the Autocephalous Churches made by Archbishop John to the Second All-Diaspora Sobor of the Russian Church Abroad held in Yugoslavia in 1938, gives the historical background of the present state of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. It could well have been written today, nearly 35 years later, apart from a few small points which have changed since then, not to mention the more spectacular "ecumenical" acts and statements of the Patriarchate in recent years,

which have served to change it from the "pitiful spectacle" here described into one of the leading world centers of anti-Orthodoxy.

THE PRIMACY among Orthodox Churches is possessed by the Church of the New Rome, Constantinople, which is headed by a Patriarch who has the title of Ecumenical, and therefore is itself called the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which territorially reached the culmination of its development at the end of the 18th century. At that time there was included in it the whole of Asia Minor, the whole Balkan Peninsula (except for Montenegro), together with the adjoining islands, since the other independent Churches in the Balkan Peninsula had been abolished and had become part of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Ecumenical Patriarch had received from the Turkish Sultan, even before the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, the title of *Millet Bash,* that is, the head of the people, and he was considered the head of the whole Orthodox population of the Turkish Empire. This, however, did not prevent the Turkish government from removing patriarchs for any reason whatever and calling for new elections, at the same time collecting a large tax from the newly elected patriarch. Apparently the latter circumstance had a great significance in the changing of patriarchs by the Turks, and therefore it often happened that they again allowed on the Patriarchal Throne a patriarch whom they had removed, after the death of one or several of his successors. Thus, many patriarchs occupied their see several times, and each accession was accompanied by the collection of a special tax from them by the Turks.

In order to make up the sum which he paid on his accession to the Patriarchal Throne, a patriarch made a collection from the metropolitans subordinate to him, and they, in their turn, collected from the clergy subordinate to them. This manner of making up its finances left an imprint on the whole order of the Patriarchate's life. In the Patriarchate there was likewise evident the Greek "Great Idea," that is, the attempt to restore Byzantium, at first in a cultural, but later also in a political sense. For this reason in all important posts there were assigned people loyal to this idea, and for the most part Greeks from the part of Constantinople called the Phanar, where also the Patriarchate was located. Almost always the episcopal sees were filled by Greeks, even though in the Balkan Peninsula the population was primarily Slavic.

At the beginning of the 19th century there began a movement of liberation among the Balkan peoples, who were striving to liberate themselves from the authority of the Turks. There arose the states of Serbia, Greece, Rumania, and Bulgaria, at first semi-independent, and then completely independent from Turkey. Parallel with this there proceeded also the formation of new Local Churches which were separate from the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Even though it was unwillingly, under the influence of circumstances the Ecumenical Patriarchs permitted the autonomy of the Churches in the vassal princedoms, and later they recognized the full independence of the Churches in Serbia, Greece, and Rumania. Only the Bulgarian question was com-

plicated in view on the one hand of the impatience of the Bulgarians, who had not yet attained political independence, and, on the other hand, thanks to the unyieldingness of the Greeks. The self-willed declaration of Bulgarian autocephaly on the foundation of a *firman* of the Sultan was not recognized by the Patriarchate, and in a number of dioceses there was established a parallel hierarchy.

The boundaries of the newly-formed Churches coincided with the boundaries of the new states, which were growing all the time at the expense of Turkey, at the same time acquiring new dioceses from the Patriarchate. Nonetheless, in 1912, when the Balkan War began, the Ecumenical Patriarchate had about 70 metropolias and several bishoprics. The war of 1912-13 tore away from Turkey a significant part of the Balkan Peninsula with such great spiritual centers as Salonica and Athos. The Great War of 1914-18 for a time deprived Turkey of the whole of Thrace and the Asia Minor coast with the city of Smyrna, which were subsequently lost by Greece in 1922 after the unsuccessful march of the Greeks on Constantinople.

Here the Ecumenical Patriarch could not so easily allow out of his authority the dioceses which had been torn away from Turkey, as had been done previously. There was already talk concerning certain places which from of old had been under the spiritual authority of Constantinople. Nonetheless, the Ecumenical Patriarch in 1922 recognized the annexation to the Serbian Church of all areas within the boundaries of Yugoslavia; he agreed to the inclusion within the Church of Greece of a number of dioceses in the Greek State, preserving, however, his jurisdiction over Athos; and in 1937 he recognized even the autocephaly of the small Albanian Church, which originally he had not recognized.

The boundaries of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the number of its dioceses had significantly decreased. At the same time the Ecumenical Patriarchate in fact lost Asia Minor also, although it remained within its jurisdiction. In accordance with the peace treaty between Greece and Turkey in 1923, there occurred an exchange of population between these powers, so that the whole Greek population of Asia Minor had to resettle in Greece. Ancient cities, having at one time a great significance in ecclesiastical matters and glorious in their church history, remained without a single inhabitant of the Orthodox faith. At the same time, the Ecumenical Patriarch lost his political significance in Turkey, since Kemal Pasha deprived him of his title of head of the people. Factually, at the present time under the Ecumenical Patriarch there are five dioceses within the boundaries of Turkey in addition to Athos with the surrounding places in Greece. The Patriarch is extremely hindered in the manifestation even of his indisputable rights in church government within the boundaries of Turkey, where he is viewed as an ordinary Turkish subject-official, being furthermore under the supervision of the government. The Turkish government, which interferes in all aspects of the life of its citizens, only as a special privilege has permitted him, as also the Armenian Patriarch, to wear long hair and clerical garb, forbidding this to the rest of the

(*Continued on page* 174)

The Counsels of the Elder Nazarius

INDICATION OF THE MOST ESSENTIAL SPIRITUAL DISPOSITIONS AND VIRTUES

1. *The Prayer of Jesus*

THE HEAD AND BEGINNING of all virtues is, to the extent possible, unceasing prayer to our Lord Jesus Christ, which is called, by way of abbreviation, the *Prayer of Jesus*; the Apostle says concerning it: *Pray without ceasing* (I Thes. 5:17). That is, one must call upon the Name of God always, whether we be conversing, sitting, walking, working, eating, or doing anything else. At every time and in every place it is fitting to call upon the Name of God. For by this means, writes Chrysostom, the temptation of the enemy is consumed. Beat the warriors, says St. John Climacus, with the Name of Jesus, and a stronger weapon you shall not find either in heaven or on earth. Prayer is the banishment of sorrow and dejection, the germination of meekness and angerlessness, the offering of joy and thanksgiving; and innumerable good things are acquired through prayer.

2. *Self-reproach*

ONE MUST TRAIN oneself in self-reproach, that is, always accuse oneself and not others in one's mind, reproach oneself and not others, and with a severe distrust of oneself accuse oneself of the failings which are covered up by our self-love, accuse ourself of our inclinations to sin. He who has self-reproach has peace, writes Abba Dorotheus, and will never be disturbed. If to such a one there should occur an illness, a wrong, a vexation, or some similar misfortune, he ascribes everything to his own sins and thanks God. If such a one is punished or reprimanded by the superior, he accepts all this as good and accepts every severe word against himself without murmuring or talking back, as the judgment of God.

3. *Self-knowledge*

SELF-KNOWLEDGE is needful; this is the knowledge of oneself and especially of the limitation of one's talents, one's failings, and lack of skill. From this it should result that we consider ourselves unworthy of any kind of position, and therefore that we do not desire any special positions, but

rather accept what is placed upon us with fear and humility. He who knows himself pays no heed to the sins of others, but looks at his own and is always repenting over them; he reflects concerning himself, and condemns himself, and does not interfere in anything apart from his own position. He who is exercising himself in self-knowledge and has faith, does not trust his faith, does not cease to test it, in order to acquire a greater and more perfect one, heeding the word of the Apostle: *Examine yourself, whether ye be in the faith* (II Cor. 13:5).

4. *Meekness*

LABOR to acquire meekness. Concerning the heavenly virtues, meekness and humility, the Lord Himself teaches us, saying: *Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls* (Matt. 11:29). Learn not from angels, not from men, but from Me, He says; that is, from the higher wisdom. May outward meekness be manifest in this: may your walk be meek, meek your sitting, meek your glances, meek your word. The clothing of a man, the smiling of his teeth, and the way he walks inform concerning him. And meekness of the soul is, according to the inner man, the restraint of anger, the taming of rage, and when one, being saddened by another, does not revenge himself even if he can and accepts vexations without causing them in return. Meekness is when one does not vex anyone either in word or deed or in command, but rather gladdens the heart of every man by his manner of acting. *Saith the Lord: To whom will I look, but to him that is meek and silent* (Is. 66:2). The prophetic word says: *The meek will the Lord guide in judgment* (*in understanding*), *and the meek will He teach His way* (Ps. 24:9). *For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people,* and *He will beautify the meek with salvation* (Ps. 149:4). *But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace* (Ps. 36:11). And concerning the kind of rest and peace which a man receives from meekness, Chrysostom writes, saying: There is nothing firmer than meekness, nothing stronger; it preserves our soul in constant quiet, and strives to lead it as to a harbor, and is the cause for us of every contentment; and nothing so places the soul in rest and great quietness as meekness and humility. This is more honorable than all crowns for one who has acquired these virtues; it is more profitable than every honor and glory. The upright soul, says Climacus, is a co-dweller with humility, while an evil soul is the slave of malice; the souls of the meek are filled with knowledge, but the mind that is prone to anger is covered with the darkness of ignorance. The meek soul receives words of wisdom: *Many are they that are exalted and glorious, but to the meek shall mysteries be revealed,* writes Sirach (Sirach 3:19). He who hates those who grieve him, hates meekness. He who flees those who grieve him, flees also

the rest which is in Christ, in the words of Abba Dorotheus. God reposes in meek hearts; while the restless soul presents an open door to the devil. The meek soul is the throne of simplicity of heart; but the mind that is prone to anger is the slave of malice.

5. *Humility*

STRIVE ABOVE ALL to acquire humility. Humility is the true knowledge of one's nothingness and the despising of oneself, and it is when one, knowing his infirmity, sinfulness, worthlessness, does not in the least raise himself up in his own mind, but considers himself worse than everyone, more sinful than they and the least, and as being beneath everyone's feet. If a humble man has any kind of virtue, he ascribes it not to his own power but to God's help, in accordance with the words of Jesus Christ, Who said: *So ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants* (Luke 17:10); and *For without Me, ye can do nothing* (John 15:5). Humility is understanding yourself and everything about yourself as being nothing. For fleeing temptations nothing can serve better than meekness with humility of spirit and constant vigilance of the mind. Great indeed is the height of humility, according to the words of St. Macarius [the Great]; worthy is this honor and praiseworthy is the wisdom of humility. There is no one higher than one who is humble, and none more glorious than the lowest one in Christ. There is no more successful path leading to heaven into eternal life, than humility according to the witness of truth. Where there is no light, everything is covered with darkness, and where there is no humility all our works are abominable before God, says Climacus. God dwells in the humble, but departs from the proud. Where there is humility, the glory of God shines forth. Pride is inimical to Christ, but humility is pleasing to Him, in the words of Demetrius of Rostov. Even though one may have performed innumerable good works and accomplished every virtue, but thinks highly of himself — he is the poorest and most wretched of all, in the words of Chrysostom.

The true prosperity of a man in this life, in the words of Saint Ambrose, consists of humility and not of exaltation.

Nothing so makes the heart contrite and the soul humble as to seclude oneself in one's mind and to keep silence with everyone. Humility is the foundation of Christianity.

6. *Obedience*

STRIVE TO PASS through holy obedience with zeal and without murmuring and with renunciation of your own will. Fulfill your particular duties with attention and understanding, as if they were assigned by the Lord Him-

self. For it is written: Have the abbot as if he were God Himself, and the brethren as if they were angels of God; he who submits to the elders or the abbot imitates an angel; but he who opposes them opens his heart to the devil. Lord, have mercy! These words are terrible which Saint Ephraim the Syrian wrote. Christ the Saviour showed us an example, having himself *humbled Himself, and become obedient even unto death* (Phil. 2:8). *Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not* (I Peter 2:23); and to speak in another way, the sword is two-edged, which with one edge cuts oneself and with the other one's neighbor.

7. *A Clean Conscience*

ONE SHOULD HAVE a conscience which is clean and candid, as the Apostle says: *Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense before God and men* (Acts 24:16); *for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly* (Heb. 13:18). For just as it is impossible for rain to fall without clouds, so too without a good conscience it is impossible to be well pleasing to the Lord. What is made manifest is light, and what is not made manifest is dark; therefore let us reveal to our father not only what we say, but also what we think. And there will come a time when we shall be judged not according to the book of knowledge and understanding, but according to the book of conscience.

8. *Silence*

INASMUCH as silence, in the words of Saint Arsenius, is the root of sinlessness, it is quite necessary for a beginner to have this; let silence be maintained until one is questioned. Speak little, and that quietly; and without need do not speak. He who guards his lips preserves his soul; but he who is bold with his lips dishonors himself. Silence gathers; but much speaking scatters. The Apostle James teaches, saying: Be swift to hear, but slow to speak and slow to anger (James 1:19). He who is silent is great in understanding.

9. *Have Not Your Own Will*

TRY NOT to fulfill your own will, and do not trust your own understanding; thus you will be delivered from murmuring. Take off your will as an unclean garment; for one's own will is sometimes worse than bad works. Obedient novices have all been saved, but those who follow their own will have been harmed, and some have perished. The fall of one who keeps silence is the abandonment of prayer; but for a novice it is the trusting of his own understanding: and I know no other fall for a monk, says Abba Dorotheus, than the trusting of his own understanding. And Peter Damascene

says: Let us know of our monastic work, that we can be saved anywhere if we abandon our own desire.

10. *Repentance*

WHEN AS A MAN you have sinned in anything, repent over it before God. If you are reproached by anyone, without any contradiction beg forgiveness with a bow, saying: I beg forgiveness, I have sinned, I am guilty; for it is good, teaches Abba Dorotheus, in answer to any word which we may hear, to say: forgive me. If anyone reproaches you, vexes you, or offends you in any way, do not become angry at that brother, but going away, pray for him to God in this way: Lord, forgive him; and ascribe that offense to the invisible enemy, inasmuch as he teaches us to offend each other. Never lie to anyone about anything, and keep no kind of evil in your heart; inasmuch as he who hates one who has offended him hates meekness, therefore he who flees those who offend him flees the rest which is in Christ. *He that refuseth correction hateth himself; but he that heareth reproof loveth his own soul* (Prov. 15:32).

11. *Patience*

BEYOND THESE VIRTUES one must be trained in great-hearted patience, so as to endure everything that happens to us without murmuring. We shall have patience when we accept everything that happens to us, both the joyful and the sorrowful equally, as from the hand of God. *In your patience possess ye your souls,* Christ teaches us (Luke 21:19). Endure, O slave of the Lord, and you shall acquire your soul which you have caused to perish through sins. In patience is the assembly of all the virtues by which our souls are saved, as Saint Ephraim says: having acquired patience, one touches on every virtue; for one rejoices in sorrows, and is well-tried in misfortunes, is joyful in danger, ready for obedience, filled with love, glorifies in vexation, is humbled in reproaches, unwavering in misfortunes; he who has acquired patience has acquired hope, and such a one is adorned with every good work. Concerning the many other virtues, such as faith, hope, and love, read yourself the holy books and listen to instruction, through which you shall become wise and shall inherit eternal good things in Jesus Christ our Lord, which may we all receive by His help and Divine grace. Amen.

Where there is no love of God and fear of Him, there is every kind of disorder and evil thing!

THE END OF THE COUNSELS OF THE ELDER NAZARIUS.
GLORY BE TO OUR GOD!

The Decline of the Patriarchate of Constantinople

(*Continued from page* 168)

clergy. The Patriarch has no right of free exit from Turkey, and lately the government is ever more insistently pursuing his removal to the new capital of Ankara (the ancient Ancyra), where there are now no Orthodox Christians, but where the administration with all the branches of governmental life is concentrated.

Such an outward abasement of the hierarch of the city of St. Constantine, which was once the capital of the *ecumene,* has not caused reverence toward him to be shaken among Orthodox Christians, who revere the See of Sts. Chrysostom and Gregory the Theologian. From the height of this See the successor of Sts. John and Gregory could spiritually guide the whole Orthodox world, if only he possessed their firmness in the defense of righteousness and truth and the breadth of views of the recent Patriarch Joachim III. However, to the general decline of the Ecumenical Patriarchate there has been joined the direction of its activity after the Great War. The Ecumenical Patriarchate has desired to make up for the loss of dioceses which have left its jurisdiction, and likewise the loss of its political significance within the boundaries of Turkey, by submitting to itself areas where up to now there has been no Orthodox hierarchy, and likewise the Churches of those states where the government is not Orthodox. Thus, on April 5, 1922, Patriarch Meletius designated an Exarch of Western and Central Europe with the title of Metropolitan of Thyatira with residency in London; on March 4, 1923, the same Patriarch consecrated the Czech Archimandrite Sabbatius Archbishop of Prague and All Czechoslovakia; on April 15, 1924, a Metropolia of Hungary and All Central Europe was founded with a See in Budapest, even though there was already a Serbian bishop there. In America an Archbishopric was established under the Ecumenical Throne; then in 1924 a Diocese was established in Australia with a See in Sydney. In 1938 India was made subordinate to the Archbishop of Australia.

At the same time there has proceeded the subjection of separate parts of the Russian Orthodox Church which have been torn away from Russia. Thus, on June 9, 1923, the Ecumenical Patriarch accepted into his jurisdiction the Diocese of Finland as an autonomous Finnish Church; on August 23, 1923, the Estonian Church was made subject in the same way; on November 13, 1924, Patriarch Gregory VII recognized the autocephaly of the Polish Church under the supervision of the Ecumenical Patriarchate — that is, rather autonomy. In March, 1936, the Ecumenical Patriarch accepted Latvia into his jurisdiction. Not limiting himself to the acceptance into his jurisdiction of Churches in regions which had fallen away from the borders of Russia, Patriarch Photius accepted into his jurisdiction Metropolitan Eulogius in Western Europe together with the parishes subordinate to him, and on February

28, 1937, an Archbishop of the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch in America consecrated Bishop Theodore-Bogdan Shpilko for a Ukrainian Church in North America.

Thus, the Ecumenical Patriarch has become actually "ecumenical" [universal] in the breadth of the territory which is theoretically subject to him. Almost the whole earthly globe, apart from the small territories of the three Patriarchates and the territory of Soviet Russia, according to the idea of the Patriarchate's leaders, enters into the composition of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Increasing without limit their desires to submit to themselves parts of Russia, the Patriarchs of Constantinople have even begun to declare the uncanonicity of the annexation of Kiev to the Moscow Patriarchate, and to declare that the previously existing southern Russian Metropolia of Kiev should be subject to the Throne of Constantinople. Such a point of view is not only clearly expressed in the Tomos of November 13, 1924, in connection with the separation of the Polish Church, but is also quite thoroughly promoted by the Patriarchs. Thus, the Vicar of Metropolitan Eulogius in Paris, who was consecrated with the permission of the Ecumenical Patriarch, has assumed the title of Chersonese; that is to say, Chersonese, which is now in the territory of Russia, is subject to the Ecumenical Patriarch. The next logical step for the Ecumenical Patriarchate would be to declare the whole of Russia as being under the jurisdiction of Constantinople.

However, the actual spiritual might and even the actual boundaries of authority by far do not correspond to such a self-aggrandizement of Constantinople. Not to mention the fact that almost everywhere the authority of the Patriarch is quite illusory and consists for the most part in the confirmation of bishops who have been elected to various places or the sending of such from Constantinople, many lands which Constantinople considers subject to itself do not have any flock at all under its jurisdiction.

The moral authority of the Patriarchs of Constantinople has likewise fallen very low in view of their extreme instability in ecclesiastical matters. Thus, Patriarch Meletius IV arranged a "Pan-Orthodox Congress," with representatives of various churches, which decreed the introduction of the New Calendar. This decree, recognized only by a part of the Church, introduced a frightful schism among Orthodox Christians. Patriarch Gregory VII recognized the decree of the council of the Living Church concerning the deposing of Patriarch Tikhon, whom not long before this the Synod of Constantinople had declared a "confessor," and then he entered into communion with the "Renovationists" in Russia, which continues up to now.

In sum, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in theory embracing almost the whole universe and in fact extending its authority only over several dioceses, and in other places having only a higher superficial supervision and receiving certain revenues for this; persecuted by the government at home and not supported by any governmental authority abroad; having lost its significance as a pillar of truth and having itself become a source of division, and at the same time being possessed by an exorbitant love of power — represents a pitiful spectacle which recalls the worst periods in the history of the See of Constantinople.

HEALINGS FROM INTERNAL MALADIES

II

*From a Letter to Bishop Savva of Edmonton**

YOUR GRACE: We have read the booklet published in California concerning the life and activity of the ever-memorable Archbishop John (Maximovitch), formerly of Shanghai.† I am Maria Petrovna Prigorovskaya (now Radionova), a former teacher of the Commercial College in Shanghai, and I know two cases of serious illnesses which were healed by the prayers of Vladika John.

1. Unfortunately I do not remember the year, month, or day when in the orphanage of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, which was founded by Vladika John, a six or seven year old girl suddenly became ill; towards night she had a very high temperature and she cried out from pain. About midnight she was sent to the hospital of the Russian Orthodox Brotherhood. The doctor who was called, D. I. Kazakov, now reposed, found in the girl a twisting of the intestines (volvulus). Other doctors, as well as the mother of the girl, were also called. After an examination and consultation the doctors announced to the mother that the condition of her daughter was hopeless, and even an operation might be fatal. The mother nonetheless asked them to save the girl and perform the operation, and she herself, being a religious woman, went immediately at night to Vladika John, who lived in a house near the Cathedral, not far from the hospital.

Vladika John, who did not lie down on a bed at night, immediately received her and listened to her fervent request to pray for and save her only daughter. Vladika summoned the mother to the Cathedral, opened the Royal Gates, and began to pray before the Altar Table, while the mother, standing on her knees in front of the iconostasis, likewise fervently prayed for her

* Russian text in *Orthodox Life,* Jordanville, N.Y., 1971, no. 12, p. 15.

† *Blessed John Maximovitch* (in Russian), St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Platina, California, 1971.

daughter. This continued for a long time, and it was already dawn when Vladika John, having finished praying, went up to the mother, blessed her and told her to go home, for her daughter would be alive and well.

The mother, encouraged, hastened, not home, but to the hospital. There she met Dr. D. I. Kazakov, who told her that the operation had proceeded successfully and added that he had never seen such a case in his practice. He was a very religious man and added that only God could have helped through her fervent prayer. Then the mother said that she had just come from Vladika John, who had been praying together with her in the Cathedral. Within a few days the girl was released from the hospital. The whole of Shanghai knew about this miraculous recovery of health.

2. Likewise I do not remember the date. A former teacher of our Commercial College became ill. He was taken to the hospital of the Russian Orthodox Brotherhood, where the doctors diagnosed a dangerous appendicitis and told his wife that he could die any minute. Dr. Ogilvy declared that even an operation would not help, and he might die during the operation. His wife was in despair. She remembered Vladika John, who had saved the girl by his prayers, and she went to him. Vladika knew the sick man well. The wife told him about the condition of her sick husband and asked him to pray for him. Vladika, having listened to her, calmed her and said that he would go to the hospital right away, and he added that the life of a man is not in the hands of doctors, but in the hands of God; and he sent her home. (She was a teacher at the girls' high school in Shanghai.)

Vladika John went to the hospital. He went up to the bed of the sick man, placed his hands on the man's head, prayed for a long time, and then blessed him and left. When the wife came to the hospital to see the sick man, Nurse Cornilova, on meeting her, told her that an extraordinary thing had happened. Towards morning, in going through the wards, she had come to her husband and seen that he was sitting up in bed. She raised the sheet in order to put him back in bed, and she saw that the sheet on which he was sitting was all covered with pus and blood. The appendix had burst outwards and drenched the sheet. This was an extraordinary thing. The doctors affirmed that there had never been such a case in their practice, and when they found out about Vladika's visit and his prayer over the sick man, they understood that a miracle had occurred by the prayers of our dear Vladika, who was always a man of prayer for us.

The sick man did not even remember that Vladika had been to see him and had prayed for him. After his release from the hospital, he and his wife had a moleben of thanksgiving served and they thanked Vladika for his prayers.

Australia *October* 5, 1971 *Maria P. Radionova*

Father Nicholas Zagorovsky

IN MONASTICISM HIEROMONK SERAPHIM

Part of a Chapter from the Forthcoming Book
OPTINA MONASTERY AND ITS ERA*

By I. M. KONTZEVITCH

After 1914 I. M. Kontzevitch (†1965) attended Kharkov University and rented a room in the home of Father Nicholas Zagorovsky. He often acted as server for Fr. Nicholas in church and accompanied him when he served molebens in private homes, protecting him from the people who always crowded around him. Thus the young Kontzevitch was known to Father Nicholas' reverers as a church-minded student, which at that time was a rarity. These reverers of Father Nicholas later, during the Russian Civil War, helped him a great deal, and one of them even saved his life.

Professor Kontzevitch twice gave a lecture on Father Nicholas in San Francisco. The material for this lecture was taken first of all from his own experience, but also from information received from Father Nicholas' daughter (Lydia N. Bobrishchevaya, who died in Paris in 1964) and, chiefly, from Ulyasha Nozdrina, who accompanied Father Nicholas in his banishment and was tonsured by him a nun with the name Magdalena (now a nun in the Lesna Convent in France). The present article, presented here in English to mark the 100th anniversary of Father Nicholas' birth, was compiled from the author's lecture notes by his wife, Helene Kontzevitch, and so it has a rather condensed and "understated" form — through which, nonetheless, the radiant and holy character of Father Nicholas shines undimmed. The photographs are from the collection of Professor Kontzevitch.

Professor Kontzevitch remarked that Father Nicholas' face reminded one of the Greek philosopher Socrates (see photograph opposite), but that the expression of his face was simply incomparable. It radiated kindness and friendliness, shining with an extraordinary goodness, attracting everyone to him.

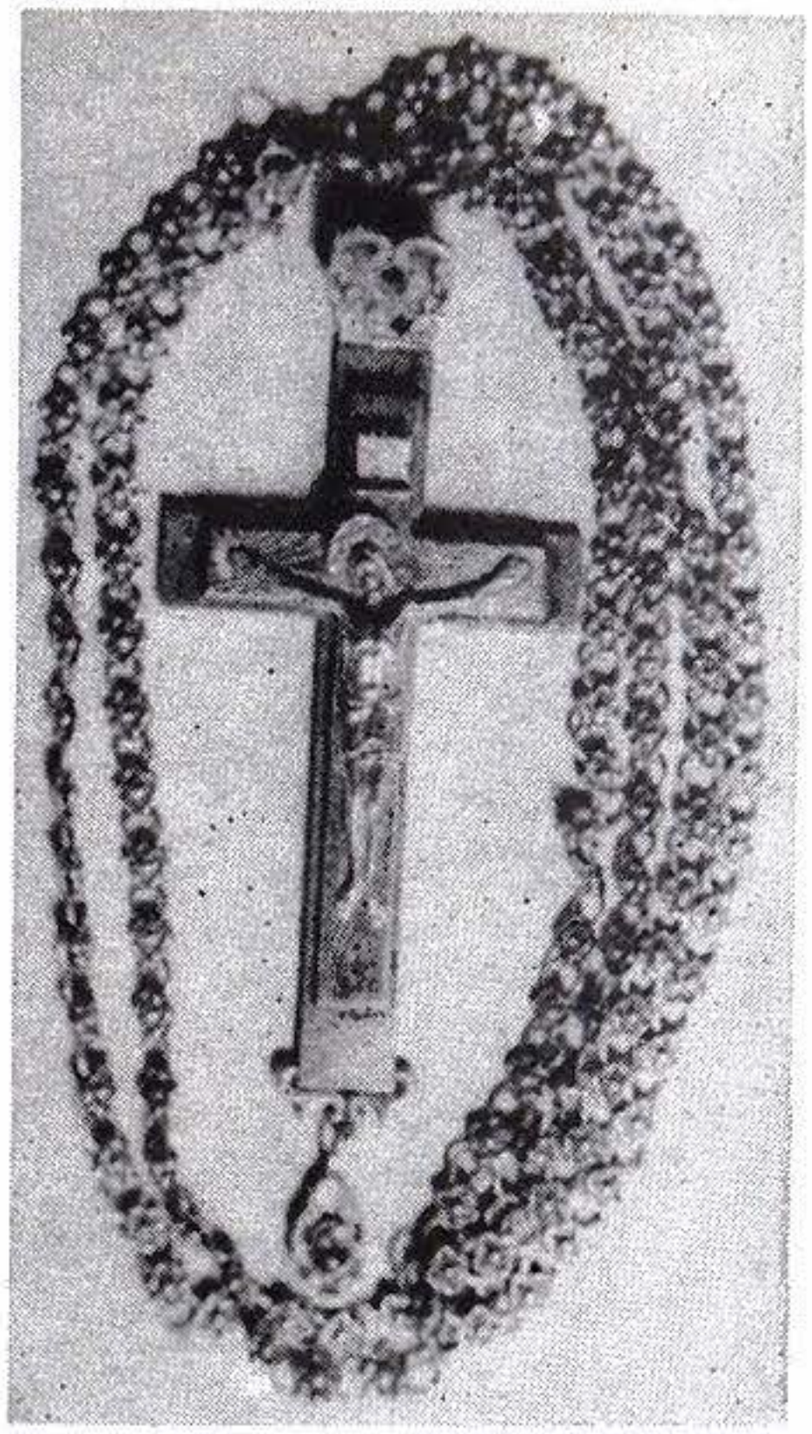
FATHER NICHOLAS WAS descended from an ancient family of princes who became poor and went over to the religious calling. His father, Deacon Michael Theoktistovich, lived in a border region of Akhtirka. He was a man of meek character, not of this world. Apart from Church nothing existed for him. But on the other hand his wife, Para-

* In Russian. The Russian text has also appeared in *Orthodox Way* for 1966 (yearly publication of Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N.Y.).

FATHER NICHOLAS ZAGOROVSKY
July 27, 1872 — September 30, 1943

sceva Andreevna, nee Romenskaya, was a dominating woman. She had an exceptionally gifted mind and great talents. Left a widow very early, she brought up three children: Michael, Anna, and the youngest, Nicholas. Although the mother was illiterate, she understood the meaning of education and strove by all means to give an education to her children. The elder son, Michael, was very gifted, finished the seminary, entered the academy, but out of poverty he did not complete it and died early from tuberculosis. The younger son, Nicholas, grew up in the bosom of nature in the village of Gusynitsa together with peasant children. Young Kolya Zagorovsky was exceptionally lively, cheerful, and active. From his childhood he loved folk songs and likewise his native Little Russian dialect.

Father Nicholas with his son



Father Nicholas' priest's cross

After entering the seminary he began to write poetry. But he did not like to study, and he especially hated mathematics. Nonetheless, Kolya was always among the best students in the seminary, being gifted with literary talent. In the older classes the teacher of Russian language organized plays. In this way there was uncovered in the young Zagorovsky an exceptional talent as a comedian. He had only to appear on the stage to evoke a storm of laughter in the public. The glory of Zagorovsky spread far beyond the seminary. A well-known actor-promoter in the Ukraine offered him to become a member of his troupe, with an enviable salary. But his mother would not hear of this: "I want to see you in gold vestments, otherwise I will curse you!" she declared to her son. He had to submit.

Father Nicholas' wife, Ekaterina Ivanovna, was an educated woman, and they had two children. The village where he was priest was called Malyzhino, a complete backwater. There Father Nicholas had no place to manifest his richly endowed nature. One can well imagine the difficulties which the young priest endured. The icon of the Mother of God which he so glorified was undoubtedly a witness of his bitter tears and suffering soul. Indeed, how could such a lively nature be reconciled to vegetating in such a dull and wild backwater? And how deep must have been the inward battle of this man to turn a comedian into a celebrated spiritual preacher and pastor of the people! But such a rebirth indeed occurred: brilliant secular talents were transformed into spiritual ones. It was an evident miracle. The icon of the Mother of God which was revered by Father Nicholas as wonderworking was not at all a copy of the ancient icon called the "Search of the Lost." But Father Nicholas gave it precisely this title! This leads one to think that the young priest

had been on the verge of despair, and the Mother of God Herself had placed him on the right path.

The people loved Father Nicholas, but when it came time to give the children an education, he moved to Kharkov and became the priest of the hospital church of the city. Here Father Nicholas continued, just as in the village, to serve akathists in front of the icon and to give sermons. He was not disturbed that in the beginning only one or two old women attended these services, although of course he could not but be sad to see the people absent. But this situation did not last long: very soon the church was full to overflowing. His fame, as of another Chrysostom, spread throughout Kharkov. The small hospital church began to become so crowded that the walls became wet from human breath. At the Liturgy Father Nicholas would give two sermons, one of them devoted to the Gospel of the day. Someone once said: "Batiushka didn't speak long today, only an hour and a half." He left church hardly before three o'clock.

Under Father Nicholas a special choir was formed with which he visited private homes to serve molebens. After the moleben everyone ate and then sang "psalms" — religious songs. Many of these were written by Father Nicholas himself. I. M. Kontzevitch and another young man who was called Demochka sometimes accompanied Batiushka.

Around Father Nicholas there began to gather a women's monastery. Its organization was going forward at full tempo and all preparations for it had been completed when the Revolution broke out. Thus, the monastery was never officially opened, but it existed secretly. One of the future nuns was Ulyasha Nozdrina. She had been intending to marry, but once she entered church when Father Nicholas was preaching. This decided her fate forever: she renounced her bridegroom and chose the monastic path. Father Nicholas chose Ulyasha as his companion when the time of banishment came.

Father Nicholas organized pilgrimages for the people, in one of which I. M. Kontzevitch took part. In this pilgrimage several thousand people participated. They walked in groups; before each group a cross, icons, and banners were carried. They walked while singing, but in such a way that the group following could not hear the singing of the group in front of it. Before the latter another cross, icons, and banners were carried, and something else was being sung. There was a multitude of such processions. Not long before the end of the road, Father Nicholas got up on a raised place and spoke to the people. He said that they were going to pray for rain, for there was then a terrible drought.

When they came to the place, the people disposed themselves in the forest around the Kuryazhsky Monastery. Since the churches could not hold all the pilgrims, the All-night Vigil was served the whole night through on an elevated place in the forest. This whole time until dawn, hieromonks were giving confession to the people. When in the morning the Liturgy was served, the communicants received Communion out of all the chalices which were in the monastery. This took half a day. When the Communion was finished,

Father Nicholas said: "Now we are going to serve a moleben for rain. Everyone fall down and pray to God until the heavenly tears begin to fall on the earth." The people fell to the ground. And suddenly in the clear sky clouds began to appear; and indeed, on the dusty earth there began to fall, like tears, great heavy drops of rain, raising the dust on the road... When the rain began the people were about to throw themselves on Father Nicholas, but the monks surrounded him and conducted him to the monastery. Everyone went wherever he could for shelter. When everyone had found shelter, a tremendous torrent burst out.

After the meal the bell-ringer came to Father Nicholas and asked: "Do you order to ring for assembling the people?" Father Nicholas reflected, bowing his head. Then he said: "Ring!"

The rain continued to pour as out of a vessel... But no sooner had the bell been sounded for the return trip than the rain immediately stopped. Returning home to Kharkov, the mass of people walked along the streets with branches in their hands and the enthusiastic singing of "Christ is risen!" The residents of the city opened their windows, struck with perplexity at the sight of such rejoicing in the moving mass of people.

FATHER NICHOLAS' popularity among the simple people was extraordinary. In Kharkov, after the Russo-Japanese War, there were especially many criminals. Bandits lived on Cold Mountain. But then one of them would become fatally ill. There were cases when Father Nicholas was sent for, and he would then be led at night along dark paths. His psalm-reader would tremble and shake from fear. In the cave where they were led stolen furs would be lying in the corner. But none of the thieves offended Father Nicholas. Only after the Revolution a certain bandit-revolutionary tore off his gold cross.

While he was still living in Kharkov, from standing on his feet during his long services and prayers, Father Nicholas formed sores on his legs. But he joked about himself, saying that if his legs would not carry him, then he would have to carry them.

In time Father Nicholas began to function as a starets with the blessing of the Optina Starets Father Anatole (Potapov).*

The Revolution began. One can imagine that the mass of people who were grouped around Father Nicholas were not disposed in favor of the Revolution. Father Nicholas' influence was very great and widespread. Even at the very beginning, discounting all this, the Bolsheviks called Father Nicholas and offered him to enter with them into a certain agreement. From him there was demanded only one thing: not to give any sermons against the Communists. They even offered him a subsidy in gold for his charitable work. To this proposition Father Nicholas replied that he served the One God and no one else. Soon he was arrested and placed in prison. It may be that Father Nicholas' arrest followed upon his defense, together with a crowd of people, of the monastery which served as the residence of the bishop of Kharkov —

* On the life of Starets Anatole, see *The Orthodox Word*, 1971, no. 4.

who at that time was Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky. As soon as the news of Father Nicholas' arrest had spread, the square in front of the prison was filled with peasant carts, full of country provisions. As long as Father Nicholas was kept in prison, all the prisoners were fed on the provisions brought to him.

Seeing such a great love of the people for Father Nicholas, the authorities decided that it would be calmer if he would be sent out of Kharkov.† It was proposed to him to leave the city and go somewhere else. Father Nicholas, taking Ulyasha with him, went to Petersburg. Many nuns wanted to accompany him, but his choice wisely rested on Ulyasha — first of all because of her unlimited dedication and strong health. Jesting, he would say to her: "You haven't got a head but a pot." True, she did not understand a great deal, but she was devoted not in words but in deed. Who could have borne all that she bore!

And so Father Nicholas and Ulyasha found themselves in Petersburg. This was the time just after the so-called "Living Church" appeared. Walking about the city, Father Nicholas and Ulyasha went everywhere where there were churches of the "Living Church." Once they entered a church which was near their residence. Here a possessed woman angrily threw herself at Father Nicholas with a scream: "Oh, you baldy, oh, you whiner — have you come here too to torture us?" The people who were standing around did not know what to think, looking at the humble figure of Father Nicholas, who was dressed in a simple peasant garment. But soon the people felt that it was not at all an ordinary man they were looking at, despite the fact that the exiles strove to stay in the shadows. Here is an example. One day Father Nicholas was in bed sick. The bell rang. Ulyasha opened the door and saw some gypsies standing at the threshold. "Does the Father live here that tells fortunes?" they asked. "No," replied Ulyasha. "But they gave us this address: 46 Borovaya Street," said the gypsies. "Tell the Father that they have stolen a horse from us." Ulyasha went to Father Nicholas and said: "Some gypsies have come, but you can't receive them. Someone's stolen a horse from them. If you receive them, we're lost. We can't receive anyone." "All right," said Father Nicholas, "we can't receive them; but all the same tell them to look for the horse at their neighbor's." A few days later the gypsies again appeared, but now with sacks full of provisions. They had found the horse at their neighbor's.

Here is another incident. Father Nicholas never went anywhere, only to church. Suddenly a woman came and begged him to give the Sacraments to a dying woman. Against all his rules, Father Nicholas got ready and went, taking with him the revered icon of the Mother of God, "Search of the Lost." In a garret on a bed a young woman lay unconscious. Out of her mouth there flowed a bloody foam. Two children were weeping bitterly. "Children," said Father Nicholas, "pray to the Mother of God — She will hear the prayer of children." He began a moleben with an akathist before the icon he had

† He had been arrested another time as one of a group of 24 priests who had rejected the "Renovationist" church.

brought. Tears flowed in streams down the face of Father Nicholas; he was literally drenched with tears. After the moleben he was told: "But Batiushka, you haven't read the prayers for the departure of the soul!" "It isn't necessary," he replied. Soon the grateful children came to Father Nicholas and brought him flowers and an embroidered belt such as the clergy used to wear in Russia. After this the healed woman herself came. Although she had been unconscious during the moleben, nonetheless she had felt how a living power had poured into her. She became a devoted spiritual daughter of Father Nicholas for as long as he lived in Petersburg.

Here is another memorable case of Father Nicholas' clairvoyance. Father Nicholas and Ulyasha had to look for a new apartment, because a great many people had begun to come to them. They found a fine place. Ulyasha was encouraged and said happily: "How wonderful! Here, Batiushka, we'll put your bed, and here the table." But Father Nicholas stood pale and said nothing. Finally he turned to the landlady: "Tell us what happened here." It turned out that an agent of the secret police had hanged himself there. Of course, they didn't rent this place.

In 1930 Father Nicholas was arrested for refusing to accept the "Declaration" of Metropolitan Sergius and was imprisoned in the "House of Preliminary Confinement" in Petersburg.*

HIS STAY in Petersburg ended for Father Nicholas in the famous "Holy Night," as it was called by the believers of Petersburg, when in a single night in 1932 five thousand of the people most devoted to the Church were arrested.

The prison where Father Nicholas was confined was so overcrowded that the unfortunate priest of God stood on his feet for nine days until one of the criminals felt sorry for him and gave him a place under a table where he could lie down on the floor. After this Father Nicholas was sent to Solovki. His Matushka, accompanied by the faithful Ulyasha, undertook the long journey in order to visit him. When they both arrived and were allowed to see him, he came out to them shaved and emaciated. This was during a fast—but in giving provisions to the prisoners it was absolutely required that they be of meat. Ulyasha prepared cutlets out of lentils which the jailors took for meat.

After his stay in Solovki, Father Nicholas, together with other prisoners, was sent to the far north for settlement. They went by foot over the tundra, stepping from hillock to hillock. Mosquitoes tortured them. In one place the travellers spent the night in an abandoned chapel. Awakening, Father Nicholas saw that he was sleeping before the icon "Search of the Lost." This encouraged him inexpressibly, and he felt that he was under the protection of the Queen of Heaven. He alone made it all the way to the assigned place: the rest had not survived, but died on the way.

Ulyasha, devoted as always, did not leave Father Nicholas here either. She came to him alone in a wagon, carrying a basket with provisions. She travelled thousands of miles. The way went across the taiga. Often she was

* See *The Orthodox Word*, 1971, no. 2, p. 93.

struck by the spectacle of the northern lights shimmering in the sky. God Himself preserved her, and she arrived safely. Father Nicholas was watched by guards. Ulyasha did not lose heart. She would call the soldiers "Detka" or "Vanka," slap them on the back, and remind them of their own mothers. "This is my uncle," she told them; "he took me in when I was an orphan and raised me. You have a mother too — remember her! Let me go and eat with my uncle!" Permission was given, and Father Nicholas went to eat with Ulyasha.

Finally, Father Nicholas served out his time of punishment. He was released to live wherever he wanted, except in Kharkov province. Looking at a map, he saw that the nearest city to Kharkov was Oboyan in Kursk province. And so they went on a train and were already approaching their goal. They were telling each other that once they got out of the train they had no idea what to do next. Their conversation was overheard by a simply dressed woman who was travelling with them; she turned out to be the wife of a banished priest to whom she was travelling for a visit. Looking closely, she recognized in Father Nicholas' face the face of a priest. She informed her fellow-travellers that in Oboyan there was a secret convent. She gave them the address. The travellers went there and rang. The nun-gatekeeper opened the door for them. Finding out that they were asking shelter for the night, the nun categorically declared to them that this was impossible: they themselves were hiding, and if they began to allow outsiders in it would immediately attract attention to them. "All the same, tell the Abbess about us," Father Nicholas requested. The Abbess didn't let them wait for her, but quickly came out and in a friendly manner invited them to share a meal with the nuns. And what had happened? In the night of their arrival Saint Seraphim had appeared to the Abbess in sleep and said: "Seraphim of Kharkov is coming to you; receive him." Batiushka burst into tears and said: "I am Father Nicholas." But in actuality he had been secretly tonsured in Solovki and called Seraphim. He did not expect that he would return to the world and that his life would be prolonged, and he had accepted secret monasticism. At this time Ulyasha did not know this, but later when living in Oboyan, while Father Nicholas was serving the Liturgy she heard him, when receiving Communion, call himself Hieromonk Seraphim.

They were not long in finding an apartment in Oboyan. Father Nicholas never went out in the daytime. Only late at night he went outside to breathe some fresh air. He served Liturgy every day. The Proskomidia with an endless commemoration of the living and the dead lasted for hours. Sometimes his Kharkov nuns would come to him at night, and thus he guided their secret monastery.

Ulyasha lived in Oboyan in complete obedience to Father Nicholas. She was tonsured a nun by him and called Magdalena. She found work in a hospital as an orderly. Unexpectedly there came a decree: everyone who was semi-literate was obliged to take an examination according to the ten-year program, or else he would be fired. Father Nicholas began to give lessons to Ulyasha. He wrote a composition with the title "Morning in the Village" and

told Ulyasha to take it with her to the written examination and copy it out when the theme was announced. The theme which was given was, in fact, "Morning in the Village." For the oral examination Father Nicholas recommended that Ulyasha learn by heart a certain poem. "When they ask who knows it, raise your hand." And in fact they asked about this poem, and Ulyasha was the only one who knew it by heart. With mathematics it was more complicated, as Father Nicholas himself was very bad at mathematics. He opened a textbook of algebra and showed a page which Ulyasha was supposed to memorize. On the examination they asked about this very page. Ulyasha passed the ten-year plan and from an orderly she became a nurse.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR came. From the hospital in Oboyan a group of medical personnel was sent to the front, and Ulyasha was a part of it. Father Nicholas was to remain alone — old, sick, unfit for work, tortured by prisons and banishment... At the railroad platform the seating of the medical personnel took place. Everyone was called by name and placed on the train. Only Ulyasha was not called. The train left... Ulyasha hastened home. And what did she see? Father Nicholas was standing at prayer. The rug on which he was standing was all wet from tears.

The city of Oboyan was taken by the Germans. Soldiers were placed in all houses. The little house where Father Nicholas was staying was also seized. He was offered to sleep on the floor. However, the German soldiers were so struck by the appearance of this Elder, who remained constantly at prayer, that they not only did not take his bed but even took off their shoes when they entered his room so as not to disturb him at prayer.

Soon he was taken home to Kharkov in a hospital car. Here Father Nicholas performed Divine Services in his house with a great number of people present. The war was coming to an end. The German retreat began. Father Nicholas decided to go to the West, for, as he said, he had no strength to face the Bolsheviks again. When he crossed the boundary of his fatherland he wept bitterly. But the heavenly fatherland was already awaiting him. His life was cut off when he arrived in Peremyshl. He had a stroke. He was placed in a hospital, where he lived several days. He died on the eve of the Feast of the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God, September 30 (October 13), 1943.

Everything happened exactly as he had described his own death in a poem written twenty years before this while he was in Petersburg, at the very beginning of the Revolution.

Nun Magdalena shown here in Paris together with one of a group of believers who escaped from the Soviet Union just after the Second World War, when her story was recorded by Mrs. Helene Kontzevitch, here at left.

In this poem are described the last warm days of early autumn. The flowers have finished blossoming. The autumn leaves are falling to the ground. Dying nature faintly smiles, and together with her the sacred poet himself finishes his earthly days. Just as he described, so did it all happen in actuality: precisely such an autumn set in. Father Nicholas, who was not distinguished by any particular beauty in life, became more than handsome on his deathbed. His face bore the stamp of another world, of a beauty inexpressible in words. As it were a door was opened into the desired other land, where "the righteous shine like lamps."*

* When the Blessed Archbishop John Maximovitch was informed not long before his death that this biography of Father Nicholas was being prepared, he greatly rejoiced and said that during his youth in Kharkov he knew Father Nicholas well and greatly venerated this righteous confessor.

ORTHODOX

Staretz Amvrosy
of Optina Monastery

Staretz Macarius
of Optina
(see page 192)

STARETZ AMVROSY, by John B. Dunlop. Nordland Publishing Company, Belmont, Mass., 1972. 176 pp. $5.00.

UNTIL FAIRLY RECENTLY, Orthodoxy has been chiefly "known" in the English language through "appreciative" accounts by non-Orthodox Westerners on the one hand, and on the other hand through translations of the Russian "theologians" of the post-Revolutionary "Paris school" with its worldly, academic, and often highly arbitrary reinterpretations of Orthodoxy. From such sources, of course, it is not Orthodoxy at all, but only pseudo-Orthodoxy, that has become widely known in the West, and the most widely-known "Orthodox" spokesmen today in Europe and America are still the spokesmen of pseudo-Orthodoxy. However, in the past twenty years the translation of important Orthodox sources such as the *Philocalia* (in part) and the *Ladder* of St. John Climacus, together with the labors of a few centers of genuine Orthodoxy, has begun to make true Orthodoxy known at last in the

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West — the Orthodoxy that is one and the same in the Holy Fathers of the past and in the confessors of undiluted Orthodoxy today.

The present book is another in this series of genuine Orthodox sources which are now becoming available in English. It is a biography of Staretz Amvrosy (1812-1891) of Optina Monastery, consisting largely of quotations from people who knew the Elder personally and from the Elder's letters (most of them from the standard Russian *Life* of Staretz Amvrosy by Archimandrite Agapit). The result is a clear if brief picture of this as yet uncanonized Saint who was one of the last flowerings of the traditional Orthodox spirituality of Holy Russia. A special chapter is devoted to the "distinctive features of Orthodox spirituality." with a brief account also of the institution of *starchestvo* (spiritual guidance by grace-filled Elders) and its history at Optina Monastery. Especially in the last chapters the author's comments are kept to a minimum, and the life and words of Staretz Amvrosy are allowed to speak for themselves, giving a remarkable glimpse of the spiritual power which the Elder possessed from God.

The book has a few minor flaws, which should be mentioned precisely because it will doubtless have its influence in the raising up of true Orthodox Christians in America and other English-speaking lands. Thus, one would prefer to see such a purely Roman Catholic term as "rosary," with its own distinct "spiritual" connotations, replaced by a neutral and more descriptive name such as "prayer-rope," which is now being more and more used to translate the Russian *chotki*. Likewise, one winces to read the bow toward Western academicism in the mention of "pseudo-Macarius." (Does one pray to and seek guidance from a "pseudo"-anyone? But that is a basic difference between pseudo-Orthodoxy and genuine Orthodoxy — the former delights in academic games and fashions and "knowing better" than the Church's traditional wisdom, while the latter seeks first the spiritual help and guidance of the saints and their God-inspired writings, finding in the spiritual power of the texts and the opinions of the Holy Fathers the surest guide to their "authorship.") Again, in the chapter on "Orthodox spirituality," one wishes the author placed less trust in the typical "Paris" scholar Fedotov, with his gratuitous academic theories of "new trends" in Russian monasticism and a distinctly "Russian" spirituality ("Sergius was the first Russian saint who can be termed a mystic"!), and would trust rather the sound Orthodox scholar I.M. Kontzevitch, who traced one and the same Orthodox spirituality throughout the history of Russian Orthodoxy and found traditional *starchestvo* alike in St. Theodosius of the Kiev Caves (11th century), in earlier Byzantium, in the Egyptian desert, and in 19th century Optina.* There is only one spiritual tradition of Orthodoxy, which is realized with more or less clarity and power in different epochs.

* I. M. Kontzevitch, *The Acquisition of the Holy Spirit in Ancient Russia* (in Russian), Paris, 1952, pp. 6-10, 91-93, etc.

However, the greatest fault of this generally excellent book is doubtless not to be blamed on the author — for he devotes no more than two pages to Dostoyevsky's visit to Optina and correctly notes that Staretz Amvrosy is only one of several sources for the fictional "Staretz Zossima" in *The Brothers Karamazov,* the chief source being Dostoyevsky's "own rich imagination" (p. 60). However, the full title of the book — doubtless at the insistence of the publishers, for the sake of sales — is: *Staretz Amvrosy, Model for Dostoyevsky's Staretz Zossima.* One can scarcely imagine a greater disservice to the cause of making genuine Orthodox spirituality, and in particular the *starchestvo* of Optina, known, than to associate them in the reader's mind with the romantic figure of "Zossima," who according to Orthodox standards is unquestionably in the state of *prelest* or spiritual deception, being a kind of 19th-century forerunner of the present "charismatic" delusion. In pointing this out one does not in the least wish to deny Dostoyevsky's talent nor his unquestioned devotion to Orthodoxy; it is only regrettable that his idea of Orthodoxy was so colored by his romantic approach to it as to make him a dubious defender of it. However, there is much that is positive in his writings. He was one of the few great 19th-century literary figures to see that Russia could regain her national identity only by turning back to Orthodoxy and the Orthodox Tsar; his psychological insight into human nature and its need for Christianity was profound; and his analysis of the Nihilist mentality that has largely produced 20th-century history, and of its ultimate convergence with Roman Catholicism, is unsurpassed (all the "discoveries" of Nietzsche, from the "death of God" to the coming of the "superman," were discovered earlier by Dostoyevsky in the human soul and given their Christian answer).

Nonetheless, in trying to paint a fictional portrait of an Orthodox saint, in the type of which he saw the salvation of Russia, Dostoyevsky undertook a task that was simply beyond his powers. Staretz Amvrosy called Dostoyevsky "one who is repenting," and while this judgment is certainly favorable when compared with his unfavorable comments after meeting such literary figures as V. Soloviev and L. Tolstoy, it nonetheless has a rather ambiguous meaning, and it was interpreted later by Staretz Dositheus (the confessor of the last Optina Elder, Nectarius) to mean: "one who is repenting, i.e., one who is permanently repenting, but is not able to repent fully." For such a one there is hope of salvation, he is striving toward the right; but it is not for such a "repenter" to enter the realm of the heights of spiritual life and "create" the life of a saint. Indeed, the attempt in itself is an impossible one and can only falsify the subject-matter; for a saint is such precisely because he becomes a bearer of the Divine, whereas the human imagination always filters the subject-matter through its own understanding, thus (in this case) bringing the Divine down to the human. That is why there is no such "creativity" in Orthodox Christianity, no re-interpretation or reformulation, but only a *handing down* (tradition) of Divine Revelation and of the lives and writings of the Fathers which accurately manifest this Revelation — so that the Divine content of Orthodoxy will be preserved from generation to generation and not lost in a merely human version of it.

The "Staretz Zossima" of *The Brothers Karamazov* is a psychological and purely human portrait of an Orthodox Staretz as seen through the eyes of a passionate but "repenting" novelist, and the "Conversations of Father Zossima" in the same novel are merely the philosophy of Dostoyevsky put into the mouth of a figure of "primordial wisdom" doubtless for the same reason that Nietzsche chose "Zarathustra" to incarnate his ideas: as his highly emotional answer to the decadent and rationalist intelligentsia of his day. These "conversations" are, in a word, a call to ecstasy, to a kind of fevered exaltation of Christian life such as only someone who was sick unto death of rationalist unbelief could conceive: "Love to throw yourself on the earth and kiss it... Seek that rapture and ecstasy... Water the earth with the tears of your joy and love those tears..." This surely expresses the *yearning* of a weary soul for the simple Christian life, but it does not go beyond that. Dostoyevsky's human literary talent and his religious romanticism have successfully removed from his portrait that Divine element which so often strikes us in the authentic lives of saints, when the Saint is revealed as a God-bearer. Fiction cannot give this element, because its essential quality is precisely that it is *true*, that God actually manifests Himself in men. Missing also is the simplicity, practicality, and utter sobriety of the authentic lives and writings of the saints. One has only to turn to the letters and statements of Staretz Amvrosy in Professor Dunlop's book to find the complete antithesis of "Zossima" — a quiet and joyful sobriety that emphasizes repentance and ascetic labors and sorrows, versus an exalted, romantically idealized "rosy Christianity" (to use the apt phrase applied to Dostoyevsky by the philosopher and monk Constantine Leontiev, who truly saw and pointed to the patristic source of genuine Orthodoxy) that feeds itself on exactly the wrong spiritual dispositions. Staretz Amvrosy in many letters warns against the kind of "ecstasy" that "Zossima" preaches: "You write that for fifteen years you have been blissfully happy. This could not be if there were not some kind of deceitful enthusiasm on your part. Perhaps while you were engaged in prayer you experienced joy and tears and some inner sensations, and you deemed these sensations to be, if not from Grace, then at least something good and pleasing to God, and you were comforted by this. But St. John Climacus writes that one should not believe tears which come before purification from sins..." (p. 153).

It may be that some among the intelligentsia, among English-speaking converts too, have become attracted to Orthodoxy by reading *The Brothers Karamazov*. If so, thanks be to God. But let them know that if they wish to remain and grow in Orthodoxy, they will have to abandon the games of infancy and reach for real spiritual food. The present book — although it can hardly be said to exhaust the subject of Staretz Amvrosy, not to mention the other great Elders of Optina who are scarcely mentioned here—gives a glimpse of such spiritual food and represents another of the encouraging beginnings of the appearance of genuine Orthodox sources on which the future of English-speaking Orthodoxy must be based.

(The book may be ordered from: St. Nectarios American Orthodox Church, , 9223 20th Ave. N.E., Seattle, Washington, 98115.)

LETTERS OF STARETZ MACARIUS OF OPTINA. Eastern Orthodox Books, P.O. Box 302, Willits, Calif., 95490. 88pp. $1.50.

THIS IS another book that conveys something of the heritage of Optina. It is a small collection taken from the large Russian volume of the Elder's letters to laymen, which together with his other volume of letters to monks, could offer an Orthodox scholar a whole lifetime of study, as I. M. Kontzevitch once remarked in a lecture on Staretz Macarius. This predecessor (1788-1860) of Staretz Amvrosy, while less known in the West, is surely no less great as a spiritual director, and these selected letters (reprinted from the English edition which has long been unavailable) reveal well his sober, practical, and thoroughly patristic approach to spiritual questions. In particular, the final three letters offer sound and down-to-earth advice to a person who has fallen into a spiritual deception very similar to that of the present "charismatic" movement, which only shows that all true patristic writings are always "contemporary." Unfortunately, the translator, thinking to "improve" on the originals, has chopped up the letters and arranged the parts under mostly arbitrary categories, so that only in one or two places does one find a whole sequence of instruction to a single person. Fortunately, however, the "learned ignorance" of the translator's notes quoting the Latin "mystics" has been omitted in the reprint, making it an essentially Orthodox edition and a worthy introduction to another important source of genuine Orthodoxy.

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